



Young Child Development Center A YoungStar Shining Star Program

“Even before YoungStar was passed, Young Child Development Center’s administration and entire staff were proactive in establishing a program that meets the well-deserved five-star rating. Young Child’s team is committed to excellence and has set goals on even higher scores next year.”

--Kathy Kadar, CCRR Menasha

The following is a narrative from Dorothy Young, Administrative Director of Young Child Development Center in Appleton, Wisconsin:

Quality has always been a cornerstone of our foundation at Young Child Development Center. When I opened the center eight years ago, I designed our program with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards in mind. Quality is important because everything we do directly affects so many lives: the children, the families, the teachers and the community.

We initially chose to participate in YoungStar because we saw it as necessary to maintain the ability to accept Wisconsin Shares program. As we worked through to our visit it became a great team building experience and a way to make subtle improvements to our program. Through YoungStar I believe that our program has improved and our team is more unified.

We started our YoungStar journey with cautious optimism and apprehension. In a way we felt it was one more entity telling us how to run our programs, but once we started working as a team with each other and our Technical Consultant, Kathy Kadar, we realized that ultimately the goal was just as stated in the entire YoungStar campaign, to improve the quality of the programs offered. Kathy was key to helping us make the subtle changes that we needed to make. Kathy, Sarah Bouche (the Center Director at Young Child) and I worked in the classrooms with the teachers arranging the rooms so they had better supervision.

As a team we had completed the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) and Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) self-observations in August of 2010, so we worked on improving the scores of our initial ratings. When Sarah completed the ITERS and ECERS observations for our classrooms again in August of 2011 we felt even more confident in our programs. Sarah and I compiled a “YoungStar file box” with all the information that the rater would need for the visit; this we feel was a key in our success.

We feel that our center has improved by providing more outdoor and fitness-focused activities. We added a shade structure to the early childhood playground that also serves as an outdoor classroom. Inside we added lockers under the children’s cubbies and locking cabinets for our disinfectant and soap water sprays.

Other than the physical improvements, I feel that the team is working more as a whole instead of having a divide between the infant toddler teachers and the early childhood teachers. We are now one – which was something we had been working on for the eight years that we have been in operation.

We are very proud of accomplishing a five-star rating and feel that we did so by working together and staying focused on our goal. We are excited to have earned our stars without being accredited. I think that working with our Technical Consultant, we were able to succeed in reaching our goal. I know that the team is proud of themselves and each other and work hard every day to maintain our five-star accomplishments.

Young Child Development Center
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<http://www.ycdcappleton.com/>